

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
MINUTES
April 26, 2021

Webex Conferencing System

5:30 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER Chairperson Singer called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

PRESENT Chairperson David Singer, Vice Chairperson Otis Wheeler, Councilor Shelia Gilmour, Councilor Christine Forgey, Erin Donnally Drake, John Lunt and Allen Woods.

ABSENT None

ALSO PRESENT City Council President Penny Ricketts and members of the public.

CHAIR STATEMENT: This meeting is being recorded by the Charter Review Committee. If any other persons present were doing the same they must notify the chairperson at this time.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Forgey, second by Councilor Gilmour, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES DATED APRIL 12, 2021.

Chairperson Singer opened discussion on the Final Summary and Report:

- Committee member Woods pointed out the Final Report mentioned that Chapter 7-7 there was a recommendation for 10% for the initiative petition and 5% for the supplemental petition. He understood the Committee agreed to forward a recommendation of 5% for both the initiative and supplemental petitions. Everyone agreed.
- Councilor Forgey understood that any proposed amendments that would affect a related ordinance should be forward to the Appointment & Ordinances Committee for review. She suggested that the Chairperson prepare a list of issues the Charter Review Committee would forward ordinance recommendations to the Appointment & Ordinances Committee for review.
- Councilor Wheeler noted that according to Council procedure, a member of the Appointments and Ordinances Committee would need to sponsor the proposed recommendations. Councilor Forgey stated that she would present it to the Appointments & Ordinances Committee.
- Councilor Wheeler requested clarification to the language “There needs to be balanced with the need to be fair to the petitioners in their ability to obtain registered voter signatures.” listed in the report in regards to Chapter 7-8: Citizens Referendum Procedures. Chairperson Singer noted that it would be constituted as an “alert” that if the number of signatures is increasing that the time frame may be too short in order to obtain the number of signatures required; therefore, the time frame could not be extended within 45 days.
- Councilor Wheeler noted that he would like to see the language amended in the following paragraph on page 59, to read as follows: “The key element of the Section 7-8 petition is that once filed properly and with the requisite number of registered voters petitioning, the measure being petitioned is suspended. **Therefore, it is important to the day-to-day operations of government that a petition of this nature be filed quickly and be acted upon as quickly as possible, There which needs to be balanced with the need to be fair to the petitioners in their ability to obtain registered voter signatures.** A low number of registered voter signatures is easier to obtain than a high number of signatures. Currently, the petitioners have 30 days from the date the measure is effective to file a petition with a full set of signatures which includes time for Attorney review and the City Clerk to

draft the petition. *Several of our neighboring cities require (see Chart attached) that for a referendum petition to be valid, 21 and 30 days for filing (including the time for Attorney review and City Clerk drafting) and the signatures of either 12% or 15% of all registered voters. The Committee suggests no longer than 45 days if the percentage of required registered voters is increased considerably.* “

- Chairperson Singer explained his rationale for the proposed specific wording in Sections 7-7 & 7-8: Citizens Initiative & Referendum Petitions. There needs to be emphasis on the *effort* in which someone follows the process of submitting an Initiative Petition and/or a Referendum; i.e., time and energy, as compared to the effort a councilor or school committee member puts in to running for election, studying an issue, listening to constituents, and ultimately weighing the merits that lead to the decision on which way to vote. Following a suggestion, the Committee decided it should not be put in the position to recommend to the full Council to place this issue on the ballot.

MOTION: On a motion by Committee Member Lunt, second by Councilor Gilmour, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE FINAL SUMMARY REPORT AS SUBMITTED BY CHAIRPERSON DAVID SINGER.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Wheeler, second by Councilor Forgey, it was,

MOVED: TO APPROVE THE FINAL REPORT AS SUBMITTED BY CHAIRPERSON DAVID SINGER.

MOTION: On a motion by Committee Member Woods, second by Councilor Wheeler, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO AMEND THE PERCENTAGES RECOMMENDED IN THE INITIATIVE PETITION SECTION 7-7, FROM 10% FOR INITIATIVE PETITIONS TO 5% FOR INITIATIVE AND SUPPLEMENTAL PETITIONS.

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Wheeler, second by Council Member Lunt, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO AMEND THE LANGUAGE RECOMMENDED FOR SECTION 7-8: CITIZENS REFERNDUM PROCEDURES, ON PAGE 59 OF THE FINAL REPORT, TO READ AS FOLLOWS:

The key element of the Section 7-8 petition is that once filed properly and with the requisite number of registered voters petitioning, the measure being petitioned is suspended. **Therefore, it is important to the day-to-day operations of government that a petition of this nature be filed quickly and be acted upon as quickly as possible, There which needs to be balanced with the need to be fair to the petitioners in their ability to obtain registered voter signatures.** A low number of registered voter signatures is easier to obtain than a high number of signatures. Currently, the petitioners have 30 days from the date the measure is effective to file a petition with a full set of signatures which includes time for Attorney review and the City Clerk to draft the petition. *Several of our neighboring cities require (see Chart attached) that for a referendum petition to be valid, 21 and 30 days for filing (including the time for Attorney review and City Clerk drafting) and the signatures of either 12% or 15% of all registered voters. The Committee suggests no longer than 45 days if the percentage of required registered voters is increased considerably.*

MOTION: On a motion by Councilor Gilmour, second by Committee Member Donnally-Drake, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO CORRECT THE SPELLING THROUGHOUT THE FINAL REPORT(S) FROM SHEILA GILMORE TO SHEILA **GILMOUR**.

Motion to approve the Charter Review Committee Final Report, as amended, was on the floor.

It was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO APPROVE THE MOTION, AS AMENDED.

Chairperson Singer will prepare the Final Report as amended from tonight's meeting and submit to the Clerk's office for distribution and proper posting on the City of Greenfield's website.

President Ricketts thanked the Committee for all of their efforts and their time for working on this monumental task.

Committee Member John Lunt thanked everyone, especially Chairperson Singer, for the hard work and informative recommendations on ways to improve the Greenfield City Charter.

Committee Member Woods stated that he enjoyed working on the Committee. His one regret, however, was not meeting with his fellow Committee members in person. He commended the Committee for their work together through the virtual setting.

Committee Member Donnally-Drake asked what the next process was after the reports are submitted to the full Council. Chairperson Singer noted that once the amended final report is submitted it is now in the hands of the full Council the Committee has fulfilled their obligations.

Rank choice voting will need to be reviewed by a Charter Commission, which are elected positions. The Council may decide if a Charter Commission would be warranted; or a petition to have the issue placed on the ballot is another avenue to address the establishment of the Charter Commission.

Councilor Forgey congratulated and thanked everyone for the work they did on this project.

Chairperson Singer expressed his pride to working with the Committee members and hope everyone have a better understanding of the Charter for the City of Greenfield.

ADJOURNMENT: On a motion by Councilor Gilmour, second by Councilor Forgey, it was by roll call, 7 yes, 0 no,

VOTED: TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 6:26 P.M.